

# HYLE

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Call for Papers: Special Issue on 'Ethics of Chemistry'

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## HYLE invites papers for a special issue on Ethics of Chemistry

(deadline: May 31, 2001)

The topic 'ethics of chemistry' is meant in a broad sense including the two interrelated perspectives of professional ethics and general philosophical ethics. Regarding the chemical community as a part of larger society, then both the particular values of the chemical community as such and their relations to general societal values are at issue. The word 'values' should be taken in its broadest sense to include both professional and societal ideals not ordinarily considered in moral theory. Thus, in this special issue we wish to contribute to a better understanding of the values of chemistry and their relation to general values, i.e. the place of chemistry in the society.

We welcome studies in both descriptive and normative ethics. Descriptive approaches should be based on generally accepted methods (e.g., sociological, psychological, phenomenological, linguistic, hermeneutical, historiographical methods, etc.); case studies are particularly encouraged. Normative approaches should clearly point out which normative principles of philosophical ethics are presupposed.

The focus of this special issue is on chemistry, including subfields and related fields such as biochemistry, medicinal chemistry, chemical engineering, etc. Many of the publicly debated moral issues of science are strongly related to chemistry, though frequently located in interdisciplinary fields and sometimes associated with other disciplines such as biology or medicine. Papers on these interdisciplinary fields should make clear, by methodological or historical reasoning, in what sense the issues belong to chemistry and in what sense not. Moreover, a distinction should be made between chemistry as a science or research activity and the chemical industry as an economic institution. Papers should be on the former, which does not exclude that it takes place in or is influenced by the latter.

Contributions may deal with one or several topics of the following (not exclusive) list. The list is divided up according to the two main strands of ethics of science, but papers may also combine the two themes as appropriate.

### Professional Ethics

- Do professional codes of conduct of chemical societies withstand a philosophical analysis, particularly concerning consistency? In what regard differ these codes from each other and from codes of other professional and scientific societies?
- Are there moral ideals that underlay the specific ethical norms of chemistry?
- What can we learn from chemical cases of 'pathological science' (Polywater, Cold Fusion, etc.) about the borderline of scientific misconduct?
- Are there specific types or problems of scientific misconduct unique to chemistry or sub-fields of chemistry?
- Does chemical research (incl. evaluation, publication, and documentation) require specific forms of trust among colleagues as compared to other sciences?
- Does actual chemical research follow specific moral or non-moral values?
- Are the actual methods of chemistry (incl. research, evaluation, publication, and documentation) consistent with its values?
- Should chemical research follow specific moral or nonmoral values? If yes, why? If not, why not?
- How do cognitive and methodological values relate to moral values in chemical research?
- How does the commercialization of chemical knowledge affect or change traditional cognitive values?
- Are there specific roots of professional ethics in the history of chemistry/alchemy?

## Chemistry and Society

- Do chemists as research scientists, in particular synthetic and analytical chemists, have specific kinds of philosophically founded responsibility and (active or passive) duties to the international society because of their knowledge, skills, or practice? Is there a philosophical way to justify or to confine 'freedom of research' in chemistry?
- Is chemical research challenged in a peculiar way by conflicts of interest, e.g. scientific vs. societal interest, national vs. international, funding institutions vs. public interest, etc.?
- What lessons can we learn from case studies of chemical research with negative effects on living beings, e.g. weapon research, drug design, animal experiments, etc.?
- In which way does chemistry contribute to non-economic developments of society (e.g. moral, political, intellectual, aesthetic, etc.)?
- Does chemistry affect the way humans or societies see and define themselves?
- Does chemistry follow a specific kind of rationality that may raise conflicts with common sense or political rationality?
- Are there inherent reasons, to be analyzed by philosophical or socio-historical means, for the negative public image of chemistry as science (before and after the increased awareness of environmental issues)?
- Does chemistry in general, unlike other sciences, raise particular hopes, fears, or other emotions, to be analyzed by psychological or phenomenological means?
- How should ethics of chemistry be included into university curricula of chemistry?
- What role should the ethics of chemistry play in the formulation of public policy?
- What can we learn about the ethics of science in general and chemistry in particular from historical cases of the involvement of scientists in public affairs, such as the Manhattan project?

Manuscripts should follow the general [Guidelines for Contributions](#), available on the inside cover of HYLE and the HYLE web site. Submissions should be received not later than **May 31, 2001** in appropriate form for anonymous reviews. Send papers and inquiries regarding suitability of submissions etc. to the [Editor](#).